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PROGRESS REPORT ON ACHIEVEMENTS MADE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF UNICEF POLICY ON WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

SUMMARY

The present report reviews the achievements made in implementing the UNICEF policy and strategy on women in development adopted in 1987 (decision 1987/18, E/ICEF/1987/11), and the priority focus on the girl child approved by the Executive Board at its 1990 regular session (decision 1990/17, E/ICEF/1990/13). The report highlights the increased awareness created for the girl child and notes important advocacy publications and events, especially in South Asia and the Middle East and North Africa. The sectoral analyses show that critical problems remain in the key areas of girls' and women's education, health, work-load reduction, income and control over development resources, legal status and participation in decision-making.

The report notes that new opportunities have been created for the development of girls and women by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the historic World Summit for Children whose Declaration and Plan of Action make explicit commitments to strengthen the role and status of women, beginning with the girl child. Recommendations for further action include: (a) implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the World Summit Declaration and Plan of Action in conjunction with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; (b) priority focus on girls' and women's education and delayed marriage; (c) a comprehensive approach to women's health; (d) increased gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation of country programmes; (e) staff training in gender and women's issues; and (f) strengthening of UNICEF organizational capacity.

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INTRODUCTION

1. The present annual progress report is prepared in accordance with Executive Board decision 1987/18 (E/ICEF/1987/11) and reviews the extent to which the Board policy and implementation strategy of that year and subsequent decisions on girls and women are being implemented in ongoing and new country programmes. It also analyses constraints, especially in the sectoral and cross-sectoral areas.

2. As requested by the Executive Board in its decision 1990/17, the present report highlights issues and efforts related to the situation of the girl child. The new priority focus on the girl child has provided an opportunity for UNICEF programmes of cooperation consciously to address gender issues from childhood. This mandate has been further strengthened by the calls made for gender equality in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and for equal opportunity and enhancement of women's status in the World Declaration and Plan of Action for Implementing the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s adopted by the World Summit for Children on 30 September 1990.

3. The analysis in the report is based mainly on 1990 annual reports from UNICEF country offices and documentation for new programmes being submitted to the 1991 Executive Board. The report has also utilized information and insights from a series of in-house consultations on women and the girl child held in July and November 1990 that involved senior field and headquarters staff, regional directors and senior management.

4. Evidence from most regions shows that UNICEF programmes are giving increased attention to the needs and issues of girls and women. However, many constraints remain in the areas of policy articulation, technical competence to deal with gender and women's issues, and resource allocation at national and UNICEF levels. Therefore, the report outlines the following five crucial means to improve gender sensitivity and the responsiveness in UNICEF programmes: (a) the assignment of high national and UNICEF corporate priority; (b) the training of UNICEF staff and national counterparts; (c) policy development; (d) strengthening institutional capacity; and (e) inter-agency coordination and collaboration.

I. ANALYSIS OF PROGRAMME RESPONSES

A. Overview

5. UNICEF programmes of cooperation in all regions continued to respond to girls' and women's concerns both in an integral manner and through women-specific projects. The responses varied according to the socio-economic and cultural conditions of the countries and the level of resources. Approximately 30 per cent of the country programmes are responding satisfactorily to Executive Board policy and decisions on girls and women.

6. During the reporting period, several countries either improved their national situation analyses or undertook subnational analyses (Egypt, India, Indonesia, Nigeria and Turkey) to show more clearly the disparities and constraints facing girls and women that are often hidden in national statistical averages. For example, the national female illiteracy rate in Turkey is 15.7 per cent, but it was found to be as high as 29.7 per cent in the seven less developed eastern provinces. The fertility rate for the seven "best" provinces in Western Turkey is 2.8 per cent, while the rate for eastern provinces is 8.5 per cent.

7. The situation analyses showed continuing negative trends in female poverty in Africa and Latin America as a result of economic crises, structural adjustment, drought and war. In many countries, responsibilities for social services have been increasingly transferred to women. The full impact of the Persian Gulf crisis has yet to be assessed. However, the loss of remittances and the influx of large numbers of returnees to face unemployment will almost certainly have aggravated the poverty situation of many women and households in the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia. In at least one case, Sri Lanka, the expected returnees include an estimated 75,000 women. The situation of refugee and displaced women in several countries in Africa and the Middle East remains critical. There are also growing concerns about the health and income status of households headed by women whose proportion has reached from 30 to 40 per cent in some African, Asian and Caribbean countries.

8. While most ongoing and new country programmes recognize the fundamental causes of women's low status and depressed situation, the majority of programmes tend to focus on women's issues in isolation, without adequate attention to their interrelatedness and underlying structural factors. Furthermore, the analysis of the role and responsibility of men in both child survival, protection and development and women's development has received very little attention. An innovative approach was adopted by the new country programme for India whereby the situation of the woman - her life cycle from birth through childhood and adolescence to adulthood - was analysed, with relevant reference to gender dimensions. This enabled the programme to identify the critical periods in the life of the girl child and adolescent for preventive programme interventions. At the same time, the programme has proposed strengthening advocacy, policy support and specific socio-economic development projects for adult women.

B. The girl child: priority focus

9. In response to the Executive Board decision, all field offices were requested to highlight activities on the girl child in their 1990 annual reports. The countries in South Asia and the Middle East and North Africa, which had already identified the girl child as a priority in child survival, protection and development, reported significant advocacy, research and programme efforts. By contrast, awareness, data collection and programme interventions have yet to be developed significantly in many countries in Africa and Latin America.

10. The UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office took an excellent initiative in publishing an evaluation report entitled "Sex differences in child survival and development". Using indicators such as birth registration, weight for age, infant and under-five mortality, age of nutritional supplementation, school enrolment and legal and mean ages of marriage, the report demonstrates the extent of differential care among children under 14 years old and the neglect of girls in several countries in the region, beyond any innate differences associated with biological sex distinctions. The report has been recommended to other UNICEF regions for its methodological approach, which also permits comparative analysis among countries in the same region.

11. UNICEF Bangladesh also published a pioneering study, "The girl child in Bangladesh: a situation analysis", in January 1990. It revealed, for instance, that the prevalence of wasting was twice as high among girls 12-23 months old as among boys, and more girls than boys (61 and 48 per cent, respectively) were stunted in that age-group. The report stated pointedly: "A poor family with many children just cannot give everyone as much food as is wanted and the girl has to sacrifice for her brothers". Similar gender-disaggregated studies showed that in the northern states of India, the female mortality rate exceeded the male rate by 10 per cent for under 4 year olds and by nearly 40 per cent for 5 to 9 year olds.

12. In many contexts, when a girl child survives, she faces serious constraints in her legal and social status because of the practice of early marriage. Although by law, marriage is not permitted under 16 years of age, 40 per cent of Nepalese girls marry below the age of 14 years, and as many as 7 per cent are married by the age of 10. According to the Ministry of Health of Djibouti, forced early marriage led 39 girls between the ages of 12 and 14 years to commit suicide between April 1989 and March 1990. In Nigeria, the high level of early marriages correlates with the low level of education of girls in the northern states. In Bangladesh, over 80 per cent of girls are already married by the age of 18 years.

13. Even where girls have access to education, health and other social services, such as in Sri Lanka, Botswana and the Caribbean, teenage motherhood constitutes a major constraint to social and economic advancement. In Botswana, the teenage pregnancy rate by the age of 19 is close to 50 per cent. In the Caribbean, 60 per cent of first babies are born to teenagers. Such teenage girls begin a syndrome and vicious cycle of early childbirth, frequent pregnancies, ill health and poverty, which is often perpetuated by their daughters. The syndrome is also frequently associated with problems of low birth weight, high infant and maternal mortality, child abuse and a high incidence of households headed by women.

14. The spread of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) is an urgent reason for countries and development agencies to intensify their health education efforts to protect young girls and women. There is also a need to review approaches to the health, education and development of women to ensure that their needs at the different stages of

their life cycle are met. The present focus on the survival of children under five years old and on the reproductive roles of women of child-bearing age (15-45 years) has led to a serious neglect of the young girl and adolescent by researchers and many development agencies, including UNICEF.

15. Given the often sensitive nature of issues concerning the girl child, advocacy and social mobilization efforts must be carefully planned to galvanize political will and to ensure broad, strategic support. The UNICEF Caribbean Area Office is making such an attempt in developing a major programme of "Communication for better parenting" aimed at boys and girls, men and women, and civic leaders. A seminar on the "Girl Child First", organized by UNICEF and the Tunisian Women's Union, involved ministers, parliamentarians, senior state officials, university lecturers and non-governmental organization (NGO) leaders. One of its recommendations was the designation of 10 March as an Annual Day of the Girl Child. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit meeting held at Male, Maldives, in November 1990, declared 1991-2000 as the "SAARC Decade of the Girl Child". It has proposed a SAARC Plan of Action that would incorporate appropriate recommendations from the World Summit Declaration and Plan of Action.

16. An important initiative was taken in September 1990 in the Eastern and Southern African region when the network of UNICEF women's focal points made the girl child a regional priority, with a focus on education. In Africa (with the exception of countries such as Lesotho and Mauritius), the girl child has less than one half the chance of the boy child to go to school and bears a heavier workload in the informal sector (household, farming and trading) to support the family. Since nearly 50 per cent of the female population in Africa is under 19 years old, the education, health and improved status of girls will be a UNICEF priority on the continent in the 1990s.

17. Advocacy at the global level was enhanced by the publication of "The girl child: an investment in the future". Issued in time for the World Summit for Children, the booklet has been distributed widely to Governments, United Nations agencies, donor organizations, National Committees for UNICEF and NGOs. It underscores the challenge of childhood gender disparities, neglect and discrimination, and proposes an agenda for the full human development of the girl child in the 1990s.

18. Several countries, including Indonesia, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Philippines, the Sudan, Thailand and Zambia, have been reviewing their national laws in the context of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. UNICEF advocacy and support will aim to ensure that due attention is given to the gender dimension and the interests of girls and women in such processes. In that regard, there is an opportunity for the implementation of the Convention and the World Summit Declaration and Plan of Action to be undertaken in conjunction with the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

19. At the global, regional and country levels, UNICEF is working with national and subnational Governments and NGOs to protect the interests and rights of girl children, as well as their health, educational and emotional development. In this context, UNICEF, together with the World Health Organization (WHO), is developing programmes on healthy lifestyles for youth encompassing the prevention of drug and alcohol abuse, tobacco smoking, sexually transmitted diseases, nutritional imbalances, early marriages and pregnancies before biological and psychological maturity. If early marriages and pregnancies can be prevented, it will contribute to a significant reduction in maternal mortality, low-birth-weight babies and infant mortality, while providing opportunities for girls to pursue education or engage in income-earning occupations.

C. Sectoral and cross-sectoral responses

Health

20. At the present time, the women's dimension of UNICEF health programmes has three main aspects: the immunization of pregnant women and women of child-bearing age with tetanus toxoid to protect their new-born children; the mobilization of women as volunteers, health care givers and health workers; and the training of traditional birth attendants (TBAs) or midwives. Tetanus toxoid coverage has varied greatly from nearly 90 per cent (Cape Verde, Costa Rica, Rwanda and Thailand) to a very low 2 per cent in Yemen, with most African, Middle East and Asian countries having modest to low ranges. Most countries have reported successful experiences of mobilizing women for child immunization and other child survival, protection and development activities. The mobilization has been massive, involving up to 500,000 women in countries such as Indonesia and Peru. However, only a few countries (e.g., Indonesia and the United Republic of Tanzania) use it as an opportunity to meet women's needs or to involve men in child survival, protection and development activities.

21. There is a great challenge in the decade of the 1990s to reduce maternal mortality by 50 per cent. A preliminary survey of UNICEF country offices in 1990 indicated that the goal would be achieved only with considerable difficulty. The reasons were varied, but the most significant included the lack of data and clear knowledge of the principal determinants of maternal death, the low status of women, their lack of access to proper nutrition and preventive and curative health care services, and the absence of national policies and strategies. The highest levels of maternal mortality are currently found in countries in South Asia, the Middle East and Africa, where it ranges from 500 to 1,500 per 100,000 live births. In those regions, the problem is compounded by socio-cultural attitudes, including men's attitudes and control over women's fertility, illiteracy, early marriage, teenage pregnancy, illegal abortions and traditional practices, such as female excision and food taboos that are harmful to women's health. The HIV and AIDS pandemic has further aggravated the problem of maternal mortality, especially in Africa.

22. Viewed against such complexities, the approach of most UNICEF health programmes to maternal mortality and safe motherhood is, at present, too narrow. Many country programmes seem to limit their responses to TBA training and advocating for improvements in obstetrical and delivery care at the community level. The broad issues of girls' and women's health prior to maternity are hardly dealt with by any of the programmes, and TBA training still has to be broadened. Baseline surveys and knowledge, attitude and practice studies on women's health are needed to provide data for appropriate preventive actions. Opportunities should also be sought in the numerous contacts with women for child immunization, the massive social mobilization for universal child immunization and formal and non-formal educational programmes to provide comprehensive health education to adolescent and adult women and men.

23. In Africa, where the Bamako Initiative is being implemented, women's health should be incorporated as a major goal. UNICEF can also assist Governments to implement comprehensive safe motherhood initiatives as contained in document E/ICEF/1990/L.13, along the lines recommended by the 1990 Executive Board (decision 1990/16, E/ICEF/1990/13). A good example was reported in the United Republic of Tanzania, where UNICEF cooperated with the Government, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), WHO and Family Care International in 1990 to evolve a national strategy and action plan on safe motherhood. The strategy emphasized raising women's socio-economic status, improving family planning, strengthening family life education for men and women and improving maternal health services, including emergency care and referrals. The adoption of healthy lifestyles by girls and young women will contribute to a significant reduction in maternal mortality, especially where early marriages and pregnancies before biological and psychological maturity can be prevented. The reduction of maternal mortality requires as much, if not greater, political will as the reduction of infant and child mortality.

Nutrition

24. Several countries reported disturbing indicators of women's poor nutritional status. For example, chronic anaemia in pregnant women ranged from 40 to 60 per cent in Myanmar and was as high as 70 per cent in women of child-bearing age in India. Most African women also suffer from chronic anaemia, but statistical data are inadequate. Low birth weight, which is a critical indicator of women's malnutrition, ranged from 5.1 per cent in Zimbabwe to 22 per cent in Myanmar and 30 per cent in India. It is also an increasing problem in Ecuador, although statistical data are not yet available. Iodine deficiency disorders, especially goitres, were also reported in all regions.

25. Studies in Ecuador, China, India, Namibia and the United Republic of Tanzania identified factors such as food production, access, feeding habits, financial resources and women's decision-making capacity at the household level on resource allocation as crucial to the maintenance of good nutritional status. However, most nutrition programmes have focused on somewhat limited components of service delivery rather than on comprehensive actions to achieve

a synergistic outcome. Thus, programmes (e.g., in Ecuador, Ghana, the Niger and Nigeria) have been directed almost exclusively towards women in food production and/or processing, the distribution of micronutrients, maternal and child supplementary feeding and nutrition education. What is required is the empowerment and improved capacity of women and their communities to act at different levels to bring about systemic changes in access to resources, decision-making and other fundamental conditions that influence their nutrition. Such an approach was advocated by the UNICEF nutrition strategy (E/ICEF/1990/L.6).

26. Several countries, including Brazil, Burkina Faso, Ecuador, Morocco and Thailand, have established food and nutrition surveillance systems at provincial and district levels to generate data for policy and action. The development of a national nutrition policy with clear gender and women's dimensions would be an essential step. Some countries (Bolivia, Ethiopia, Ghana and Madagascar) have developed or are developing such food and nutrition policies with UNICEF assistance. An ongoing UNICEF training course in nutrition should facilitate the process.

Education

27. The current levels of gender disparities in education reported in Africa, the Middle East and South Asia are quite high. For example, the female illiteracy rate in Yemen is 98 per cent, while the primary school enrolment of girls is only 11 per cent. In Guinea, where women constitute 51.3 per cent of the population, girls make up only 33 per cent of primary school enrolment; and 83.3 per cent of women are illiterate compared with 62.2 per cent of men. In Ghana, 35.1 per cent of girls, compared with 27.1 per cent of boys, drop out of school before completing grade six. Significant regional differences also occur in several countries (Bolivia, India, Nigeria, the Sudan and Turkey). For example, while enrolment rates for boys and girls in northern Sudan averaged 86 per cent and 84 per cent, respectively, they ranged between 46 to 62 per cent for boys and 24 to 37 per cent for girls in underserved regions in the south.

28. Most countries are currently assessing their educational systems in the light of the World Declaration on Education for All. Gender disparity reduction has been made a stated objective in several UNICEF country programmes (e.g., Bangladesh, Brazil, India and the Sudan). The new country programmes for India, the Sudan and Turkey have also targeted girls' education in the least advantaged states or provinces using new approaches and opportunities. Thus, Turkey plans to develop a mobile teaching system to reach illiterate girls and women and to reduce drop-out rates. The Sudan envisages the use of Koranic schools (khalwas) linked to the formal educational system to enhance girls' participation. Deliberate policies to recruit women teachers in Bangladesh and Yemen have also succeeded in increasing girls' enrolment in primary schools. Bangladesh demonstrated political commitment in 1990 when it made education free to grade eight for rural girls and primary education compulsory in an effort, among others, to delay marriage for girls.

29. Multi-purpose literacy programmes for women have been intensified in several countries (Bolivia, Senegal and Viet Nam) with innovations such as the use of local languages. In Bolivia, indigenous Indian languages, Quechua and Aymara, were introduced in primary school from 1988/89 to increase the number of Indian girls entering and staying in school. Radio and television have yet to be fully utilized as part of the third channel to reach women. The problem here is often one of physical and/or cultural access. Special efforts could be made, especially in the Middle East and North Africa, to use these readily available media to accelerate the education of girls and women.

30. The most serious constraints reported in efforts to expand learning opportunities for girls and women included poverty, especially in Africa, where the educational systems have been in disarray since the 1980s; the limited time management of girls and women; the lack of child-care facilities; early marriage and teenage pregnancy; gender stereotyping in school textbooks and curricula; and the shortage of qualified teachers. It should be recognized that the solutions to many of these problems lie outside the scope of the ministries of education. Thus, it is necessary to establish serious policy and operational links between the education ministries and other social and economic ministries, as well as NGOs who work closely with communities, as has been done in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand.

Water and sanitation

31. The relationship between the involvement of women in the management, maintenance and proper utilization of water and sanitation services and the success of these services has been demonstrated in many countries, including Cambodia, the Central African Republic, India, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mexico, Nicaragua, the Niger and the Sudan. Such involvement also saves time and energy for women and improves their status in the community. The very successful examples include Mexico, where women have played a predominant role in the implementation of a rural drinking water supply project that involved innovative technologies. The project resulted in a time saving of three hours per day per woman which were used for productive income-generating activities. In the Sudan, women technicians responsible for hand-pump maintenance greatly contributed to the 90 per cent successful functioning of the water supply system and the time saving of three to six hours per person per day.

32. Other initiatives are also under way. The new country programme for Myanmar has proposed women as the majority of the members of village water committees and maintenance workers. Training of the latter will incorporate Facts for Life messages. Indonesia is undertaking a new initiative in the training and deployment of women sanitarians for hygiene education. Some 50 per cent of the 15,000 cadres to be mobilized during the period 1990-1992 will be women. In Pakistan, a school water and sanitation programme has introduced hygiene education at the primary level, with preference given to girls' needs.

33. Women are seldom involved in planning the types and locations of water and sanitation facilities that might actually prove to be inconvenient for their needs for privacy and time. In implementing the decade goals in the sector, UNICEF project staff and country representatives will advocate for the necessary changes at the country level and promote women's active educational, technical, economic and socio-political participation.

Women's income and economic security

34. Since poverty and economic insecurity severely limit women's ability to care for their children and maintain their own status, well-being and self-confidence, income generation and economic activities have formed crucial parts of many UNICEF country programmes of cooperation. The scale of these activities has varied and so has the degree of success. In general, the scale has tended to be small; the projects have often been isolated organizationally from mainstream economic activities and have rarely gone to scale.

35. An example is a household food production and income-generation project in Zambia that was evaluated in 1990. The project assisted approximately 600 women to improve their income and agricultural output to some extent, but it had limited lasting impact on the welfare of the women and their families. Owing to poor management and the lack of technical skills, a revolving fund failed to operate effectively and a system for input distribution led to dependency of the beneficiaries on the donor supply line. The project was not integrated in the mainstream activities of the Ministry of Agriculture in the target districts or in the cooperative movement in the country. It lacked technical support, relevant technology and marketing capability, and was not well adapted to the prevailing economic environment. The lessons learned have been used to redesign the project in the new country programme.

36. Some women's economic activities, however, made good progress during the reporting period. For example, the UNICEF/Special Adjustment Facility for Latin America and the Caribbean women's project in Brazil has thus far assisted 418 small businesses with credit in the amount of $204,687, benefiting 1,990 people directly and establishing 142 solidarity groups. Project monitoring showed that 80 per cent of the women had improved their income and quality of life. With the support of the Ford Foundation, the project has also developed a training programme on gender issues for project staff and women participants. The project will initiate an income-generating activity for adolescent girls in north-east Brazil in 1991. Other ongoing projects in Burkina Faso, Egypt, Indonesia, Nepal and Sri Lanka, some of which are targeted to young women and women heads of households, also reported good progress. In Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India and Sri Lanka, successful projects have addressed women's economic security within the framework of integrated basic services for both rural and urban women.

Monitoring and evaluation

37. Monitoring and evaluation of the gender and women's dimensions in UNICEF country programmes of cooperation, as well as their component sectoral

programmes, have yet to be systematized. At present, systematic monitoring focuses mainly on the extent to which women are beneficiaries of each UNICEF programme, not on the various aspects of women's participation. The development of appropriate indicators and terms of reference is under way. Sectoral guidelines and checklists for the incorporation of gender and women's issues are also being developed for the different stages of the country programme process. In the meantime, several countries have undertaken micro-studies to identify socio-economic indicators related especially to educational disparities by gender (Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Turkey) and women's participation in health programmes (Bangladesh, the Central Africa Republic, the Niger, Tunisia and Viet Nam).

38. During the year, Bolivia, Brazil, Burundi, El Salvador, Egypt, Mexico, Nepal and Zambia, as well as the Caribbean region, also showed an encouraging trend in the close monitoring and evaluation of women's income-generating projects. In El Salvador, there has been a praiseworthy collaborative effort involving the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and other agencies in such evaluations. The most important constraints identified in the projects include the lack of proper feasibility studies, the lack of credit and time-saving technologies for production, poor management, fragmentation and isolation from mainstream economic processes. Assessments in Colombia and Mexico further showed a constraint in the traditional attitudes of male agricultural, technical and economic development officers. They tended to regard peasant women as passive beneficiaries, not active development agents, and so were reluctant to provide them with technical assistance. UNICEF Colombia has proposed training workshops on how state development agencies could support peasant women's economic development activities.

II. MEASURES TO IMPROVE GENDER-SENSITIVITY AND RESPONSIVENESS OF OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

39. The analyses of experience presented in the present report, and the conclusions of in-house consultations, show that certain fundamental measures need to be taken to assure significant and sustained progress in gender-sensitive programmes that are also responsive to the specific needs of girls and women. Five of these measures are outlined below.

A. National and UNICEF corporate priority and commitment

40. Most countries with which UNICEF cooperates have adopted the 1985 Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and have acceded to or ratified the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Salient features of the above-mentioned Forward-looking Strategies and Convention have been reinforced in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the World Declaration on Education For All and the World Summit Declaration and Plan of Action on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s.

41. Article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child enunciates the principle of non-discrimination among children on the basis of sex and other criteria, while articles 19, 24 and 34 emphasize equitable health care, the abolition of traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children and their protection from sexual abuse and exploitation. These issues are covered by articles 5, 12 and 16(2) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. UNICEF goals for the 1990s also incorporate specific concerns of girls and women such as the reduction of maternal mortality, special attention to the health and nutrition of the girl child and adult women, universal access to safe drinking water, universal access to primary education and the reduction of adult illiteracy, with a special emphasis on girls and women. These goals are consistent with the objectives of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. Most recently, the World Summit for Children Declaration and Plan of Action reiterated the broad commitment to the advancement of girls and women. The Declaration (para. 20(4)) stresses the commitment to "work to strengthen the role and status of women". This is elaborated in the Plan of Action (para. 15):

> "The enhancement of the status of women and their equal access to education, training, credit and other extension services constitute a valuable contribution to a nation's social and economic development. Efforts for the enhancement of women's status and their role in development must begin with the girl child. Equal opportunity should be provided for the girl child to benefit from the health, nutrition, education and other basic services to enable her to grow to her full potential."

42. Thus, at the start of the 1990s, the ratifying countries and the international community have the necessary instruments to ensure the sound and equitable development of girls and women. Moreover, the current processes of decentralization and democratization in many countries provide unique opportunities to reach women and strengthen their participation in decision-making at community, regional and national levels. Action by countries and UNICEF to accord high priority from the highest political and corporate levels to the advancement of girls and women in national development plans and programmes of cooperation will help to achieve the decade goals for equitable human development.

B. Training

43. At its 1990 session, the Executive Board expressed concern that organization-wide training of UNICEF staff in gender analysis and gender-responsive programming had not taken place as it had requested of the UNICEF secretariat in 1988. Several country offices and the regional networks of focal points in the Americas and the Caribbean and Eastern and Southern Africa have organized training on women in development and gender sensitization, but this has been inadequate and a system-wide training is required.

44. The Executive Director affirmed this need at the high-level, in-house consultation held in November 1990. He directed that gender-sensitive training for staff should be carried out in 1991/92. In response, the Development Programmes for Women Section and the Training Section have adopted a multi-pronged training strategy to make optimal use of available resources and opportunities. A UNICEF-specific, gender analysis framework is being developed to provide a methodology on how to incorporate gender and women's concerns into programmes. The framework will also be used to review and revise existing UNICEF training packages and to guide the preparation of new ones. Staff at different levels and in different categories will also be trained, with a target of reaching at least 50 per cent by 1992. By 1994, all staff will have been sensitized and trained. National counterparts will also participate in the training with UNICEF staff at the appropriate levels.

C. Policy development

45. Several country reports indicate that a major obstacle to the implementation of UNICEF policies on girls and women is the absence of clear government policies for the advancement of girls and women. Too often, national guidelines for the promotion of women are fragmented, and the oversight responsibilities are located in the weakest branches of government bureaucracy. Occasionally, too, there are conflicting interests between the official ministries, departments and bureaux responsible for women's affairs on the one hand and political or mass women's organizations on the other. Finally, the views of women at the community level do not influence the policy-making process unless there are effective decentralized and democratic mechanisms.

46. In order to promote national policy development, UNICEF will intensify its advocacy using the global conventions and declarations on women and children. Advocacy will be supported by information and gender-disaggregated data collected through national and subnational situation analyses and operational research. In this regard, a notable achievement was recorded in Bangladesh in 1990. After two years of involvement in research, advocacy and technical support, the UNICEF Dhaka Office, in cooperation with other donors, supported the Government through the Ministry of Planning to incorporate a clear strategy and objective on girls and women in the macro-chapter of the fourth five-year plan (1991-1995) and to identify women-related objectives and targets, along with budgetary allocations, in all development sectors.

D. UNICEF institutional capacity

47. The capacity of the Development Programmes for Women Section at UNICEF headquarters and the corresponding units at the regional level to assist country offices effectively in policy and programme development, the monitoring of trends, the promotion of research, training, information and experience-sharing on a continuing basis depends heavily on the level of staff and financial resources. Headquarters- and regional-level assistance is

especially needed in country offices with low technical competence in gender and women's issues and/or complex situations of girls and women.

48. The Professional staff in the headquarters section is expected to increase to two in 1991. At present, only two regions, the Americas and Caribbean and Eastern and Southern Africa, have regional advisers. Regional advisers, who have to be technically competent, are invaluable in providing close support to needy country offices, promoting intraregional networking, technical cooperation, experience sharing and strengthening of UNICEF collaboration with regional development institutions. In fact, some sectors in UNICEF (e.g., health and education) have promoted the appointment of regional advisers for the same reasons. Other United Nations organizations, including UNIFEM, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), have also appointed or are in the process of recruiting regional advisers or coordinators on women's development issues to improve the efficiency of field office support. The situation of UNICEF regional advisers on women's issues will be reviewed and action taken in the light of the needs of the regions.

E. Inter-agency coordination and collaboration

49. Mechanisms exist at the headquarters level through the Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Women's Group of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) Subgroup on Women and the networking of the women's units of the different organizations to promote information exchange and occasional joint activities. For example, through the JCGP Subgroup on Women, UNICEF is supporting a study of the operational implications of recent analyses of women and structural adjustment. UNICEF is also a major initiator, participant and contributor to a study on "The world's women: statistical portrait 1970-1990" being undertaken under the leadership of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat and in cooperation with UNFPA, UNIFEM and the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Office at Vienna. It is due for release in June 1991.

50. At the field level, positive experiences have been reported in several countries, including Bangladesh, Brazil, Ghana, Indonesia, Turkey, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. In Indonesia, as in Bangladesh, UNICEF chairs an Informal Group on Women in Development in which all major bilateral and multilateral donors and a number of NGOs participate. A UNICEF pilot experience in carrying out subnational situation analyses on women in selected provinces encouraged the Canadian International Development Agency, working in close consultation with UNICEF, to support similar studies on women in each of the remaining 23 provinces of the country.

51. Undoubtedly, there are constraints to inter-agency coordination, including differences in the focus of mandates on women, programming cycles, funding requirements and management styles. Nevertheless, much progress has been made in collaboration and there is considerable scope for further collaboration at the country level in operational areas such as joint

situation analyses of girls and women, gender-sensitive training, development of monitoring and evaluation indicators relevant for particular country situations and evaluations of women-related programmes and projects. Such technical collaboration is being encouraged between UNICEF and other United Nations agencies, NGOs and bilateral donors, especially those that have made gender and women an integral part and criteria for their development assistance.

III. FURTHER ACTIONS

52. The present report, especially chapter II, has indicated several areas requiring further action.

53. With particular reference to the girl child and adolescent:

(a) All country offices are being encouraged to:

(i) To undertake situation analyses and gender-disaggregated data collection, where necessary, in 1991 as baselines to identify areas for strategic interventions in the 1990s;

(ii) To promote specific and appropriate measures to delay early marriage and early child-bearing;

(iii) To ensure that priority is given to the education of the girl child, especially where there are severe disparities against her;

(b) Regional and headquarters offices will intensify their advocacy with regional and international development bodies, both intergovernmental and non-governmental, and promote collaborative operational activities;

(c) The Commission on the Status of Women will be encouraged to review periodically the situation of the girl child and adolescent as part of its regular agenda;

(d) Reviews of the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the World Declaration on Education for All and the World Summit for Children Declaration and Plan of Action on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s will be encouraged to include specific reports on the status and conditions of life of the girl child, taking into account the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

54. Further actions are also required in the following areas:

(a) A comprehensive approach to women's health in which health education for women and men, family planning, responsible parenting and safe motherhood will be major components. In this regard, the level of maternal mortality would be considered an indicator of the quality of life;

(b) The education of girls and women as the central focus of UNICEF programmes of cooperation in education in order to ensure sustained improvement of women's status and development opportunities;

(c) Strengthening of women's involvement in programme planning and design in all sectors to enhance their responsiveness to women's particular needs in decision-making, work-load reduction, time and energy-saving, and income-saving or income-generation;

(d) Programme monitoring and evaluation to identify the short- and long-term impact of programmes on different categories of girls and women, especially poor women heads of households in urban and rural areas, disadvantaged women in particular ethnic or socio-cultural group and women adversely affected by economic, environmental or political crises.